2. Out-break of some contagious disease, particularly of viral origin,

3. Decreased availability of food,

4. Reduction in availability of nesting and perching sites.

(c) Steps have been initiated to deal with the problem and details are as under :—

(i). A study has commenced on the status and distribution of vultures in India by Bombay Natural History Society at a cost of Rs. 2.20 lakhs. It would *inter alia* identify possible causes of decline in population including availability of food.

(ii) An International workshop was organised in New Delhi during September, 2000 to work out a strategy for conservation of vultures. The important recommendations of the workshop include detailed survey about the current status of the species throughout the country, sample collection of sick and healthy vultures to ascertain cause of disease, detailed studies on ecological and environmental factors in important habitats of vultures and captive breeding of the species.

(iii) All Chief Wildlife Wardens have been requested to obtain information about the status of vultures in their state and to take appropriate steps to prevent the poisoning of carcasses of livestock killed by carnivores in and around protected areas.

(d) and (e) Darwin Initiative Trust, U.K. is funding a 3 year project with effect from 1-4-2001 titled "Conservation of critically endangered Gyps spp. Vultures in India" through Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai. The estimated cost of the project is about one lakh sterling pounds. The project aims to produce a recovery plan for the vultures in India and capacity development to implement the same.

Marketing Structure of Agricultural Sector

*265. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN :

SHRI RAM MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are planning major reforms in marketing structure in agricultural sector, envisaging a role for private sector and a scheme to construct 20 lakh godowns at an estimated cost of Rs. 125 crore has been prepared, as reported in 'The Hindu' dated the 2nd October, 2001;

(b) if so, the details of reforms and the specific categories and areas in which role of private sector is envisaged and the period thereof ;

(c) the details regarding the reforms suggested in areas of rice, coconut, rubber and spices and the amount of funds allotted therefor, State-wise, and the number of godowns constructed/proposed to be constructed; and

(d) the target fixed for providing credit for the agricultural sector during the current financial year ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH) : (a) to (c) A scheme for construction/renovation/expansion of rural godowns is under formulation. Under this scheme, it is proposed to provide credit linked subsidy for creating 25 lakh MT storage capacity which will be constructed in the private/ cooperative/public sector at an estimated total cost of Rs. 457.50 crores including a subsidy to the extent of Rs. 122.00 crores from the Central Government. The scheme is general in nature and does not specify crop-wise and State-wise capacity to be created.

The Government are also planning to initiate reforms in marketing structure for the agricultural sector in pursuance of the recommendations of an Expert Committee, which was constituted by the Ministry of Agriculture to examine the existing marketing system in the country. The main recommendations of the Export Committee are given below :—

(i) Government need to examine existing legal framework governing the institution of regulated markets and remove all such restrictive provisions which inhibit growth of a competitive marketing structure in the country;

(ii) Government need to promote direct marketing of agricultural produce by the farmers to maximize their share in the price;

(iii) More commodities should be added to the list of commodities allowed for forward and futures trading to reduce price risk and to facilitate integration of domestic market with international markets;

(iv) Government should promote development of national warehousing receipt system for agricultural commodities to induce increased flow of funds to the agriculture sector and to improve price risk management;

(v) Credit policy of the Government should support pledge financing by treating it as a priority sector lending to agriculture with the facility of concessional refinance;

(vi) Government need to promote marketing extension, training and research and use of information technology in agricultural sector to provide a variety of services to the farmers.

An inter-Ministerial Task Force has been constituted to examine the recommendations and suggest measures for implementation of the reforms suggested by the Expert Committee. The State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have also been requested to examine the recommendations of the Expert Committee and provide their feed back to the Task Force.

(d) The Union Budget for the year 2001-2002 envisages an increase of 24% in the ground level flow of credit for agricultural and allied activities and the credit flow is expected to increase to Rs. Sixty four thousand crores in 2001-2002.

Seed Crop Insurance scheme

*266. SHRI R. SARATH KUMAR :

SHRI P. N. SIVA :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have launched a pilot scheme to seed crop insurance to facilitate growth of seed industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) the names of crops converted under the scheme; and

(d) the details of sum insured for each crop, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHR AJIT SINGH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government launched a pilot scheme on Seed Crop Insurance in Rabi 1999-2000 with the following objectives :

— to provide financial security and income stability to the Breeder/ Seed Grower in the event of failure of seed crop;

— to strengthen confidence in the existing seed breeder/grower and encourage new breeders/growers to undertake seed production programme of newly realised hybrid/improved varieties;